

INTRODUCTION

Hi. I'm doctor Carlos McCormick and this is collaborative conversations with Carlos, a podcast where we discuss various aspects of Wake Technical Community College and the Community College movement.

If you want to find out more about the magnificent work Wake Tech is engaged in, and also learn about the many facets of the Community College movement, keep listening as we will have our diverse collection of guests from students to Community College presidents. Let's get started.

CARLOS MCCORMICK: Welcome to another episode of collaborative Conversations with Carlos.

And, joining us today is the athletic director at Wake Technical Community College, Mr. Brian Anweiler.

Brian, how are you today?

BRIAN ANWEILER: I'm doing well.

Thank you so much for having me today.

CARLOS MCCORMICK: Ohh man, it's an honor and a privilege.

And I'm glad that you're joining us.

I know there's some big things going on in the athletic department, so we'll start things off a little slowly and let's talk a little bit about yourself and how you got involved in athletics.

BRIAN ANWEILER: Well, that's a really unique story, I'm happy to share.

I am a Community College person. I attended Community College... I spent my entire professional career at a Community College.

I always tell people that I worked harder for my associate degree than my other two college degrees I have, and I think that's important to note.

Once you get into your bachelors and masters, it's hopefully something that you want to do.

The the Community College is is the tough part because you're doing the things that so the prerequisites, the the early courses and it's some you're not going that stuff out before you get to the fun stuff of what your career will hopefully be.

I started in athletics. Believe it or not, I was working in a grocery store and the men's basketball coach. Umm, my local Community College Tallahassee Community College used to come in the

grocery store and knew that I was actually interested in video and television, and he needed someone to film his games.

And that is literally... So when I was in high school, I got recruited by the basketball coach, which says a lot for a short unathletic person.

And but that is literally how I got started.

You know, being in the videographer for them in basketball team at my local Community College, and I just really enjoyed it and I've never left, to be honest with you.

I left different schools and you know, every ten years I try to bebop around, but now that I I think it's really neat.

So that's just student athletes... Athletics isn't just about the student athletes, it's about, you know, a whole bunch of stuff that students can get involved with.

CARLOS MCCORMICK: Wow, we have something in common. I actually worked in a grocery store as well growing up. So great minds do think alike and thanks a lot for sharing that story.

And you kind of a jump to the next question a little bit.

You mentioned the word student athlete and you talked about Community College.

Talk a little bit about your focus and why the word student is important in student athlete and maybe if you can share with us, are there any initiatives in place at the college to support our student athletes.

BRIAN ANWEILER: So as a as a Community College person, our student athletes and students are here for lots of reasons, and some of them, you know, and I think most of them are here because they wanna start here and then transfer and continue on with four year school playing the competing umm, so that said but we also may have a student that's interested in going into nursing and going into some of the other vocational in this career ready program.

So we kind of have to be available for all types of students and their interests.

Umm, you know, as a Community College, I mean, I'm not gonna say that, you know, we don't have all the resources of, say, a large NCAA program, you know.

But our students have the same access to all resources.

Rather, it's the ILC or wellness services... We can definitely help our students get connected and serve as a resource to get those connections made.

CARLOS MCCORMICK: And thanks for sharing and and and talk a little bit about the the the student athlete, what types of student athletes are actually eligible to participate here in our Wake Tech.

BRIAN ANWEILER: So to be a student athlete, NJCAA, which is the National Junior College Athletic Association and that's actually the second largest athletic intercollegiate Athletic Association. In the country there's over 500 member schools.

Uh, well over 40 states compete in it and it's only behind the NCAA.

So in order to be an in NJCAA student athlete first, here you have to have a high school diploma or your GED, and that's step one.

So you don't need to worry about the ACT, SAT and some of that stuff or BF a qualifier, as they say, which makes you mean certain academic benchmarks.

So it's it's... That's why some of the students come here with the goal of transferring to a four-year school because they're able to come here and get their academics in order.

And then transfer to the four-year school after meeting certain benchmarks with us. You also have to be a full-time student athlete, a full time student, pardon me to to in order to play.

So you have to be full time while your sport is in season and again you have to meet certain academic benchmarks from your first year and 2nd year.

So you're able to transition to a sophomore year and hopefully on to the four-year if that's if that's your goal.

OK, umm. And so you you try to maintain a 2.0 along the way.

CARLOS MCCORMICK: So take for example, if I'm a parent and I have a student considering Wake Tech as well as someone considering playing athletics kind of sell us on Wake Tech.

And what's your vision and why should say my child think about being a student athlete at Wake Technical Community College.

BRIAN ANWEILER: Well, I mean, we're a real option for for student and student athletes to to come because we're we're affordable.

We have a lot of resources and we have a tradition of sending students on to the next level.

I just an example this year alone, despite COVID and short having a shortened season, we had 11 baseball players move on to four year schools.

We had several volleyball players, several basketball players, all move on to four-year schools to continue their academic and athletic career.

Again, I know some students are always gonna look for that residential experience at a liberal arts, private liberal arts, public liberal arts school, but many scholarships aren't... Only the full scholarships are at the NCAA Division 1 level.

For the most part, after that it's partials and financial aid.

So you can come to a Wake Tech first two years and then if you're still gonna go on that route and go to the that liberal arts school, then then you're going to be able to transfer there and save a whole lot of money because some of those schools can be \$25,000 to \$30,000, a year and Wake Tech is much, much, much less than that.

So you're able to get your the same schools that maybe recruiting you then still be recruit you now just as a junior.

CARLOS MCCORMICK: Thanks for sharing it. And that's definitely exciting for those athletes.

And a couple of things that I like to to follow up on.

Once an individual transfers and I know each situation could be unique, but how much eligibility would they have left if they say if they went to a UNC or North Carolina Central University?

BRIAN ANWEILER: So uh NJCAA, which Wake Tech is a part of... you're allowed to use your first two of four years, umm, of eligibility, so you can't you have to play your first two years at a Community College and then the two years in the the next level.

You can't play two years at an NCAA school and then when I say I want to go to Wake Tech for two years, it it's only the other way it works.

It doesn't go both ways.

So your first two years of intercollegiate participation are all that you have, so you can play one year to four year and one year Wake Tech.

But that's or... But that's kind of how it would work because your second year would be your final year of Wake... at a Community College.

CARLOS MCCORMICK: And the other thing that I wanted to piggyback on, you talked about the the shortened season. Talk a little bit about how you as the athletic director are using this kind of pause and and athletics during this time period.

BRIAN ANWEILER: While spending a lot of time thinking about what the future is gonna look like rather it's later on this year or down the road.

So we're we're having a lot of cool stuff happening.

We are in the process of updating our brand, our logos, getting a new website.

We've just launched a e-sports intermural program that that we can talk about, I'm sure.

And in addition, we are launching an e-sports varsity team.

So those are all the things that we're doing now in addition to trying to support our current student athletes during this very difficult time... and coaches.

CARLOS MCCORMICK: Wow, that's exciting.

And yes, that was definitely one of my my questions kind of paint the picture and walk us through this exciting thing called Esports.

BRIAN ANWEILER: Well, it is the the latest thing going on in college athletics.

So, e-sports is an umbrella term much like track and field is. You've got every game within e-sports.

Rather, it's umm I game called Rocket League or League of Legends or Overwatch or Madden, or NBA2K. Those are all each a unique sport, just like under track and field.

You've got the shotput is different than than the 50-meter dash or 50-yard dash or the half marathon, or across country, so it's under an umbrella of track and field.

But it's under the e-ports umbrella, so you could have, you know, many games and sports going on with the underneath the umbrella of e-sports.

So and all the games require communication, skill, practice... So teamwork.

Not much different than... And then we'll say the traditional sports.

CARLOS MCCORMICK: So is this something that will still fall under the the conference or is this something that, hey, we may be a partnering or having competitions across the street with our sister institution, North Carolina State or will they kind of still strictly be within the NGCAA.

BRIAN ANWEILER: All of the above, so the the National Junior College Athletic Association has formed another organization called NJCAA E for National Junior College Athletic Association E-sports.

So we'll it will be a part of that group and then we can also compete in other other leagues as well, which we would be able to play against a four-year school.

So that's why it's really, it's really a fun, it's exciting and something's students I think, will really enjoy.

CARLOS MCCORMICK: Most, most, most definitely.

Let's talk a little bit about recruiting.

Is that something that that Wake Tech does actively recruit athletes from not only the Wake County but other areas of of North Carolina, United States?

And also, is there something called walk-ons and is that an opportunity here for students at Wake Tech?

BRIAN ANWEILER: Yes, yes and yes.

So we we do recruit in fact it's one of you know, our coaches spent a lot of time working hard to identify prospective students to come to Wake Tech and compete on our teams.

And we do have a little bit of scholarship money to spread around, but we of course is a two-year college... Umm, we'll always have an opportunity for our student athletes to walk-on or try out for a team.

It is hard.

A lot of people don't understand they they don't know what Community College sports is, particularly in larger cities like Raleigh because we don't get a lot of attention in the media as much as I think we should.

But it's understandable when you've got a town like this and so many large universities and large alumni bases, that that's where the attention goes.

But most definitely, we recruit umm, we do, we do... Students can try out to make a team.

I usually there's not too many spots, but you never know what you're gonna find... umm, here with our student body that there are there are skilled that may not even known that we had college athletics here.

So, I mean, we've had student on our teams this year. We had a player, a volleyball player from Hawaii.

Umm, we have folks from all over... Umm North Carolina in in in this mid-Atlantic Southern States area.

So we definitely have a broad net that we that we can reach out with.

CARLOS MCCORMICK: For students that may not be able to walk-on or or obtain a a scholarship.

But are still interested in in athletics you hear the term intramurals.

Is that something that Wake Tech is exploring and and would the athletic department be engaged in that process?

BRIAN ANWEILER: That is something that we are working on.

We are starting to, like I mentioned earlier this year through the e-sports, since it's virtual, it can be done at the student's home where they already are and chances are they already have all the equipment.

So they're they can participate and compete against other Wake Tech students. Long term would be a chance for on-campus activities, ones you know our COVID mediation keeping students mostly on campus is done.

Umm... And we're it's gonna take some more resources down the road from the college, but it is on the strategic or master plan to do that.

I don't know exactly when, but that is something that's on my To-Do List to try to implement.

I've already started a Twitter account called Wake Tech Rec, so again that's at Wake Tech Rec.

We're also on Extra now you can find our our portal on the on the Wake Tech Extra site.

We have a a page there called Wake Tech recreation and again that's where they can find more information on the intermural virtual intermural activities we have going on right now.

CARLOS MCCORMICK: Talk a little bit about the men and women that are leading these programs. Talk a little bit about your coaches and how can someone if they're interested, if there are any openings, how can they get involved and possibly be a coach here at Wake Tech?

BRIAN ANWEILER: Umm to be a coach or a student?

CARLOS MCCORMICK: To be a coach of one of the athletics.

BRIAN ANWEILER: So, first thing you'd wanna do is like reach is reach out to.

Umm, the head coach of whatever one of the sports you're interested in, we have a very... we don't have many opportunities.

I will put that out there, but there are opportunities for that and then they would if the coach is interested, then we'll have them apply through the typical Wake Tech employment process, which we do have a standalone assistant coach application on the Wake Tech employment page and then in in from there they would go through the the background checks and and we would do a contract depending on the resources that we have.

CARLOS MCCORMICK: Yes. Speaking of of students, are there opportunities for for students possibly to serve as managers or help out in other any other capabilities... Capacities at Wake?

BRIAN ANWEILER: Absolutely.

I'm like, I like I share with my story and how I got involved.

We we are looking long term for students to be the the videographers for the teams to possibly be a manager.

Umm... Maybe I mean a student coach, someone that may be interested in video production.

Maybe or or broadcasting?

I mean, those are all long-term things that that we would like to do down the road and it's a great chance for students to to get hands on experience early on.

Umm... And again, you never know where that path may lead you.

And again, I think I'm a perfect example and of of how that path can work.

CARLOS MCCORMICK: Most definitely. And we we talked about our our neighbors from 4-year universities.

I I know in the past the men's program has been phenomenal as it relates to basketball and in the past they've played UNC's JV team.

Is that something that's going to continue and possibly could we ever see the Tar Heels playing at one of Wake Tech's facilities?

BRIAN ANWEILER: I'm... I would say there's probably a slim chance of the UNC JV team... coming over to Wake Tech.

They I think they only play one road game every year and that's a long-standing agreement, but

it's a treat for our student athletes to get to play inside the Dean Dome.

So as an administrator it's great because it's like a home game.

I literally get in a van or a bus and go about 25 miles to our West and they come right home.

So I had a... It was my first time this and New Year so I did get to watch that game this year and that was my first time going into to the Dean Dome to see that.

So for lots of reasons, we'll that it won't probably ever have a game here at Wake, but it is a treat to go over there... Uh for a game and play on that court for student athletes and I and I hope that that will continue for a while.

Again 2021 and I'm not sure, but I I would expect it to be back the following year.

CARLOS MCCORMICK: Wow, that's very exciting news and and Brian, I'd like to definitely thank you for this opportunity.

Do you have any final thoughts that you like to to share with the audience?

BRIAN ANWEILER: I just hope that students will take the time to support our programs and like student activities, whether its athletics or student government or intramurals or clubs and organizations.

There's so many people that are here to help and help the students get connected to our our college and and Wake Tech and make them get that Wake Tech Eagle spirit.

Just because you may not live on campus doesn't mean you can't have a robust college experience.

And we're working really hard even this year while we're virtual to to have some opportunities for students to stay engaged while they're here.

CARLOS MCCORMICK: And you've alluded to it a little bit earlier, but it sounds like the the athletic department is deeply engaged in social media.

How can individuals from the community or Wake Tech find out more about Wake Tech athletics?

BRIAN ANWEILER: So, you can find us on Instagram, Facebook, Twitter, all @WakeTechSports.

Our website is www.waketechsport.com and you can even find us through the Wake Tech Extra... student engagement portal.

So we're we're out there... We're not hard to find, but again, just don't be bashful.

CARLOS MCCORMICK: Brian. Thank you again for joining us and for our listeners...

Thank you for tuning in and be on the lookout for our next collaborative conversation.

Thanks for listening to collaborative conversations with Carlos.

If you like the show and you want to know more, be sure to visit us at waketech.edu.

See you next time.